19: Marshall M-6 (ca. 1918) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

CHAPTER XI

HUNTING AND FISHING

There is nothing in which a Karen delights so much as t hunt, unless it be the gastronomic pleasures that follow a success ful chase. Schoolboys spend their Saturdays in the jungle with thei slingshots and blowpipes. Teachers and clerks spend their holiday in the same way. The villager may go by himself to stalk deer o shoot birds and other game along the runways; but the sport tha he enjoys most is the drive for game, which is abundant in th hills of Burma, participated in by all the men of the village arme with their weapons and nets. A promising place is chosen, such a the open end of a ravine, where some of the hunters stretch an make fast their nets and retire into an ambush near at hand The others of the party go to the far end of the area included in th drive and begin to beat the bushes with their spears and knive while shouting and making a great noise generally. The game i thus driven from cover to the nets, where it usually gets entangle and is soon dispatched by the spears and crossbows of the me waiting there. Nearly all kinds of game are caught in this manne from rabbits to tigers and elephants. Pigs and deer are, howeve most commonly hunted in this way. This is men's sport, and th women never take part in it, so far as I know. The game is d vided among the hunters, each sharing more or less equally. any parts of a carcass are supposed to possess medicinal valu they are appropriated by the one who killed the animal and di tributed by him as he thinks best.

Besides the ordinary weapons used in warfare and describe in the chapter dealing with that subject, the Karen employ in th chase the blow-gun, the crossbow, the bow, and the spear. Th blow-gun is similar to that used in Malaysia, Borneo, and the Philip pine Islands, but is not decorated as are those of the Malay tribe The implement consists of a ten or twelve-foot length of a slim va riety of bamboo, the tube or bore of which is the size of a sma pencil. The length is first straightened by being hung from a tre with a weight of stones or logs to the bottom end. The transvers

19: Marshall M-8 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

membranes at the joints are then drilled out with a sharp stick of hard wood, and small arrows are shaped and smoothed to fit accurately the bore of the blow-gun, the rear end of each arrow being tufted with a circle of feathers. A quick expulsion of the breath against one of these missiles inserted in the long tube drives it with sufficient force to kill small birds and game at a distance of a few yards. To use the implement effectively one must be able to stalk the game noiselessly and to bring the weapon to bear on it unawares. This gun may have been copied from Burman guns, for I do not find it in the hills.[1] The Karen hunters do not seem to be as skilful in its use as are the tribesmen of the Philippines, Borneo, and the Malay States.

The crossbow ("hkli") is one of the favorite implements for hunting among the Karen, but never seems to have found favor with them as a fighting weapon.[2]

The stock is made of some firm wood and has a small handle, like that of a cheek-gun.[3] Its entire length is not more than three feet. The bow is shaped out of cutch wood ("nya"), which is very tough and resilient. It varies in length, but is usually about four feet. The string is twisted fibre, generally that of the roselle plant *(Hibiscus sabdariffa)*. The bow is so strong that sometimes it takes two men to bend it, the string being held back by a rough trigger. The arrows consist of straight pieces of bamboo sharpened and slightly charred in the fire at one end to harden them, while they are tufted with feathers or fitted with a slip of dry palm or plantain leaf at the other end, which is bound around with string. Sometimes the arrow tips are barbed or supplied with flat iron points, and sometimes they are smeared with a thick gum taken from the Upas tree *(Antiaris ovalfloria)*, which is indigenous to Burma. This species of tree is similar to that from which the Malay and Borneo tribes obtain poison for their arrows. The milky juice exudes from incisions made in the bark of the tree and drys into a dark viscous gum, which is very bitter. This poison is supposed to be more virulent if gathered at certain times of the year. After being smeared with the poisonous substance, the arrow-tip is al-

[1] For a discussion of the blow-gun, see Hunt and Haddon, *Papua Head of the Malay Peninsula*, Vol. I, 154-157.

[2] The crossbow is found all over Tonquin among the Lius and the Laos. It is used in China, having been evidently adopted from the Lolo, as its name there indicates. It is not seen in Tibet, or is it used by the Burmans or by the Malay tribes, except as a toy by the children in Borneo: Hose and MacDougall, *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo*, Vol. I, 66. The crossbow does not seem to be found in the Philippine Islands.

[3] See p. 188.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1918) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

lowed to dry for a short time; but if kept too long it loses its noxious quality.

The crossbow will send an arrow thirty or forty yards with considerable accuracy. Those skilled in the use of the weapon can shoot to a greater range. The arrow will pierce the body of a man or a tiger and sometimes protrude on the other side. When wounded by a poisoned dart the Bwe may bind up the wound with the juice from young bamboo shoots, but he immediately tries to obtain what he considers a good antidote, namely, the hog-plum *(Spondius mangifera)*, which he eats either dry or green. Failing to find this remedy, he resorts to alum. The Paku tribesmen eat a little of the poisonous gum itself, thus producing vomiting, which seems to counteract the effect of the poison in the wound. They sometimes apply alum to the injured part and bind it up. The Burmese, who greatly fear the consequences of being infected with the poison, poultice the wound with white sweet potato, which they chew into a paste for the purpose.[4]

The Karen have a kind of bow that resembles in general the long bow used in the English Army back in the fourteenth century. It is called "hki p' ti" and is fashioned of bamboo with elastic ends, being fitted with two parallel strings held an inch apart by little struts of bamboo. A tiny mat is plaited between the strings at the center to hold the pebbles or mud balls that are used instead of arrows. A block of hard wood, some four inches long and an inch and a half wide, is lashed to the middle of the bow. This serves as a handle by which a twisting motion is imparted to the bow when it is sprung, thus enabling the ball or pebble to pass to one side of the bow-shaft. This weapon is much used by children in shooting birds and small animals.

The trap is one of several automatic contrivances which the Karen fashion and leave in places frequented by birds or animals for their capture. Besides the spring trap, there are the box trap and the pitfall. As the name of the last contrivance suggests, the pitfall is a large hole that has been dug deep enough to prevent an animal from jumping out, once it has fallen in. All traces of the digging are obliterated, and the top is covered with branches and

[4] *Cf.* Mason, *British Burma*, 490. For an account of the poison made in Borneo from the Ipoh *(Antiaris toxicaria)* see Hose and MacDougall, *Pagan Tribes of Borneo*, Vol. I, 218. Skeat and Blagden, in *Pagan Tribes of the Malay Peninsula*, Vol. I, Chap. VI, pp. 242, ff., give an account of the preparation of poisons employed by the various tribes of that country. But a map of the area in which the poisons are used does not include Burma, probably because their use among the Karen was unknown to the writers.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

728 hold of the cup, while they mutually promised to terminate their feud, to intermarry their children, not to destroy each other's property, and to live amicably together unto the third generation. In pledge of these promises each of the twain drank of the cup. Imprecations were then called down upon the head of any one who should renew the feud, and the visiting delegation was dismissed. A shower of arrows was sent after the departing guests, and a salute of muskets was fired in token of the power of the raiders. Sometimes the peace-making water was drunk and the pledges were [211] made under a hardy and well-known tree, on which a notch was cut in testimony of the compact. Dr. Mason in his account of these forays and peace pacts states that the Karen had no monuments other than these notched trees.[2]

As already remarked above, the treaty of peace was ratified between the organizer of the victorious raid and the vanquished villagers. The former and his descendants were bound by the compact not to renew the attack; but that did not prevent another foray if a new occasion arose for seeking redress, just as a man in a more advanced community might win a suit against another and be compelled to go to law with him again to settle a fresh dispute. Moreover, the pact did not remove the possibility of another foray being organized by some other inhabitant of the village where the first one originated, for the purpose of revenge on his own account. Thus, it would appear that these treaties were not mere "scraps of paper," and yet they did not suffice to prevent frequent raids. It [177] was not until numbers of the Karen removed to the plains and thus came more closely into contact with a common enemy, the Burmese people, against whom they had to defend themselves, that they seem to have largely given up the killing of one another. I have not been able to find any evidence to show that the Burmese Government exercised its power in suppressing the forays among the Karen, and I think that such private wars decreased in number for the reason just given.

WEAPONS

411 The weapons used by the Karen in their fighting were spears, javelins, swords, and flint-lock and match-lock guns. The crossbow seems not to have been well adapted for warfare and has been kept for hunting. The commonest forms of fighting

[2] *Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. XXXVII, Pt. II, p. 161.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

implements were spears and javelins. These were usually made with iron heads either of small bayonet-shape or elongated elipse-shape sharpened to a point. In the case of the larger spears the head measures about two feet in length and two or three inches across at the widest part of the blade. The shaft of some hard wood is five or six feet long.

The *Karen Thesaurus* distinguishes among three kinds of swords or "na," as they are collectively called by the people themselves. One kind is the two-edged sword with a sharp point ("na thweh hko"); the second is a blunt sword shaped like the tail of an eel ("na nya hti meh"), and the third is square at the end and can be used for cutting only ("na xu hko").[3] These swords were carried in sheathes of a type similar to those seen among the Shan, formed of two pieces of bamboo held together by rattan bands woven around them. No one knows whether or not these weapons are native with the Karen. They may have been copied from the Shan. Besides the three kinds of swords, the Karen used a long knife ("dah") for both defensive and offensive purposes, which is devoted nowadays to domestic employment.[4]

During the sixteenth century the Portuguese carried on an extensive trade in firearms in the East, especially in Burma. In this way the Karen tribes became familiar with flint-lock and match-lock guns, owning numbers of them. In numerous instances the stock of the gun had no butt to be held against the shoulder, as in the case of European and American guns, but a handle that was held against the cheek. Powder was "pounded out" in a mortar containing sulphur, saltpeter, and charcoal, all native products. The sulphur was often obtained from the deposits of bat dung found in the limestone caves that are numerous in the Moulmein district. Indeed, one of the common names for gun-powder was "bla-e," meaning bat dung. Inasmuch as lead mines have long been known in Burma and on the Chinese border, I presume that the Karen got the material for their bullets from these. When lead was not to be had, they substituted small round stones.

The approaches to the villages were guarded by burying sharpened bamboo spikes, hardened with fire, in the paths, leaving only the point protruding at a sufficient angle to catch the foot of the passer-by. These almost hidden spikes inflicted terrible wounds in

[3] For the weapons used in hunting see pp. 104, ff.
[4] *Karen Thesaurus*, Vol. III, 154; Cross, *Karen-English Dictionary*, 907.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

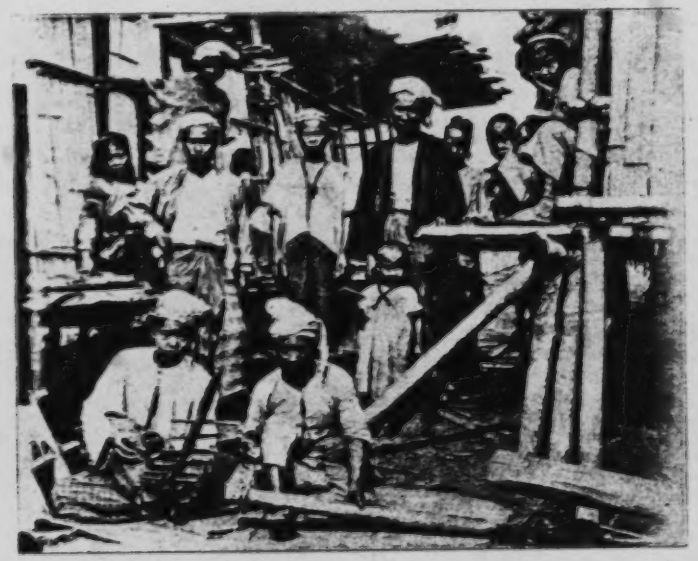
712 -160
411
726

the bare feet of the enemy who was careless enough to run into them.

In the early times the participants in a foray equipped themselves with armor and shields, although such protective contrivances are almost unknown at the present time. The armor was a sort of jacket of thick hides thought to be serviceable in warding off the strokes and thrusts of sword and spear. The name by which it was known was "t' xo." Shields, called "k' taw," were constructed of wood and covered with a tough skin. I have not been able to learn from any one what was their shape or just how they were made. However, Mr. F. H. Gates, the political officer of Karenni, gives us this bit of information on the subject: "A generation or two back these people carried a shield made of plank covered with buffalo hide and studded with brass nails." He adds that no specimens of these shields are to be obtained now.[5]

[5] *Report* of 1894-95, p. 22.

534



A Sgaw Karen Orchestra, Thabawaddy Hills
The harp and the guitar are being played together.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Karen AP7

224

343. KAREN SPRING-SPEAR (DYAN)

making traps and snares for animals, whose habits they observe closely, and whose calls they mimic. Squirrels are their principal quarry. For deer they set a spring-spear called *dyan* at a salt-lick. This is a source of danger to travellers, who have to be on their guard for the warning sign set at the approaches to the *dyan*. They keep common wild cocks and pheasant cocks, as well as doves, for decoys. The decoy-cock is tied by the leg to a post in the centre of a circle of snares; when a wild bird hears him crow and comes to fight he is caught. [857] The chief game of Karén children is transfixing bamboo hoops as they bound past, a practice for spearing running game. [411] The Karéns use a cross-bow (No. 204), with simple, and occasionally also with poisoned arrows. [412] All the Karén utensils are of home manufacture, with the significant exception of the *dâ* and axe, their chief implements, which are made by Shans and Burmans. [439] They even make rough pottery when at a distance from the market. The women spin, dye, and weave their own yarn; but they are beginning to use the [286] ready-dyed yarn that is imported. Every member of a Karén household 585 labours for the common fund. Young Karéns do not marry till mature—twenty to twenty-four. Marriages are arranged by the elders; but, if a pair mate of their own choice, the lad has to give a buffalo or its value to the girl's parents. Unlike the marriages of the civilised races of the country, the Karén marriage is a great festivity. 291 Karén unmarried women wear only a [502] long smock (*thindding*) [224] of plain white. Married women wear a blue embroidered smock over a figured loincloth. 000 Men and women

344. KAREN HUNTERS BRINGING IN WILD PIG.